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ABSTRACT

The relationship between schooling in the English language abroad and the subsequent acculturation and attainments of Hispanic and Asian immigrants to the United States was investigated. Data were obtained from the 1976 Survey of Income and Education. For the analysis, educational background factors were related to socioeconomic and language measures. Thirty-one percent of the Asians and 3 percent of the Hispanics reported English schooling abroad. Previous study of English produced measurable socioeconomic and English language ability advantages for both Hispanic and Asian immigrants. Education in English was a bigger factor for Asians than for Hispanic immigrants, both in terms of its differentiating effect within the broad ethnic group and in terms of the proportion of individuals who had the advantage. For Hispanics, the important factor seems to be whether or not they had any schooling before immigrating. However, schooling abroad only partially explained the differences in educational and income attainment among Asian and Hispanic immigrants to the United States. It is concluded that two factors must be taken into account whenever any comparison among Asian and Hispanic immigrants is conducted: (1) Asian immigrants are ten times more likely to have had schooling in English before emigrating, and (2) they generally have higher prior education levels. (RW)

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THE EFFECT OF SCHOOLING ABROAD ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC AND LANGUAGE PATTERNS OF FIRST GENERATION HISPANICS AND EAST ASIANS

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TN-7

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THE EFFECT OF SCHOOLING ABROAD ON THE SOCIOECONOMIC AND LANGUAGE PATTERNS OF FIRST GENERATION HISPANICS AND EAST ASIANS

Introduction

Ethnic differentials in socioeconomic attainments constitute one of the fundamental areas of conflict and controversy in the United States today. This is so in the public arena, where either market success or government aid to one group can spark hostility and outcries from the less successful or less privileged groups. But it is equally true among members of the social science community, for the differing explanations of these differentials relate directly to fundamental differences in theoretical outlook. Psychologistic vs. sociological, group conflict vs. societal consensus, human capital vs. internal colonialism, normative vs. situational, primordial vs. class analysis . . . all these issues and more are involved in the debate over ethnic differences in attainments.

The focus of these debates has been over the well documented black/white and Hispanic/anglo gaps, which we know to be the results of lower rates of social mobility for blacks and Hispanics, not just their more disadvantaged socioeconomic starting points (at least as conventionally measured). This research has naturally concentrated on the native-born, and the core of the debate has been the degree to which specifically racial/ethnic factors, whether they be interpreted in terms of subcultural or external pressure effects, are responsible for social mobility differentials. But in recent years there has been growing interest in immigrants and communities with recent past and/or continuing waves of immigration.

Most notably the Japanese, but other Asian groups as well, have been singled out as examples of communities that have faced great hardships both abroad and initially in the United States, but have overcome them and established themselves as equal or superior to the American average. Implicitly or explicitly, their achievements have been contrasted to the apparent failures of blacks and Hispanics. Some issues of measurement and many of interpretation

remain to be argued over, but there can be no argument over the "facts" of the matter on the superficial level of current socioeconomic situations.

One of the greatest points of contrast is between the current situations of Asian and Hispanic immigrants. Among the former there is a component of refugees from Southeast Asia who are bad off, in terms of socioeconomic status; among the latter are some Cuban and other middle-class and professional immigrants from Latin America. On the whole, however, the groups contrast markedly in both their current situations and their social origins. Of course, the obvious approach to understanding their current differences begins with understanding these differing origins, and all but the most obtuse social scientists understand this. The difficulties lie in obtaining information about these background differences, and then in understanding how they interact with conditions in the United States to create the differentials we see today.

This research note examines the factors of schooling abroad, generally, and specifically schooling in the English language, and how they relate to the subsequent acculturation and attainments of Hispanic and Asian immigrants in the United States. The available data are limited and far from ideal, but this note should contribute to the information about background differentials and their consequences, and possibly to increasing our understanding of at least a small piece of this vast issue.

Hispanic and Asian Immigration

There is nothing novel in pointing out the educational disadvantage of Hispanic immigrants, particularly those from Mexico. both survey and census data document that Mexican immigrants, in terms of years completed, average only 60-70% as much schooling as native-born Hispanics, and compare even less favorably to non-Hispanics. Of course, this schooling has presumably not been in English and has not included extensive study of English as a foreign language. Hispanic

immigrants are, then, faced with a double disadvantage in comparison to natives: Fewer years of formal schooling and very limited English skills. Hispanics are hardly the first group to face these disadvantages: Since the expansion of public education in the late nineteenth century, those growing up in the United States have had a decided educational advantage over immigrants from Europe or wherever. Indeed, it is because of the sense that the United States is, after all, hardly responsible for the prior schooling of immigrants that the focus of ethnic differentials research has been on the native-born.

No one seriously expects Hispanic immigrants to do as well as natives, both because they have the usual immigrant disadvantages and, less explicitly, because we know that they come from particularly humble circumstances. But what about comparing them with other contemporary immigrant groups, particularly Asians? Those even superficially familiar with the two immigration flows recognize certain important differences: The long-distance immigrants from East Asia have, and indeed must have, greater resources to get to the United States, and this sort of immigration is likely to favor the more privileged, the world being as it is today. In contrast, immigration from Latin America, particularly from Mexico, is open to all but the most oppressed segments of Latin American society and involves less of a resource commitment.

Both immigrant streams are extremely diverse, but the stereotypes of the Mexican laborer and the East Asian merchant are not really so far off the mark. The character of Hispanic immigration has probably not changed greatly in recent years, with the growth in professional immigration being balanced by the growth in the immigration of laborers. The increase in East Asian immigration has been much more spectacular. While the relatively disadvantaged immigration from Southeast Asia has probably been the most visible new trend, the core of this new immigration has been relatively well-educated young people from the Philippines, Hong Kong and Korea. No longer just shopkeepers, many of these are professional and paraprofessional workers, and a considerable number combine solid educational backgrounds from their

home country with advanced education in the United States. Koreans, in particular, stand out: According to immigration statistics, 72% have professional, technical or managerial backgrounds, in contrast to only 28% in the U.S. work force generally (HEW, 1974, p. 141).

Despite these obvious background differences, there remains a strong tendency to make direct and unqualified comparisons between Hispanic and Asian immigrant groups. Certainly, socioeconomic and educational background differences (and the two tend to be isomorphic in the Third World) do not explain everything; however, if we are to understand the apparent differential success of Asian and Hispanic immigrants (and also the subgroup differences among them), we should at least start with background differences. Common sense suggests that one particularly important factor is the knowledge of English that immigrants bring with them. Schooling of any sort probably makes language learning easier, but those who have studied English and, in particular, those who have studied <u>in</u> English must surely have a marked advantage.

The data used in this analysis (the 1976 Survey of Income and Education) include no information specifically about socioeconomic backgrounds, for immigrants or for others. However, since schooling and social class are much more strongly associated in Latin America and Asia than they are in the United States, much of what we have to say about schooling is implicitly about social class. Schooling in English takes on a special meaning because, beyond its intrinsic meaning discussed above, it is probably the best indicator we have of socio-economic status. Throughout the Third World, education in English is the preserve of the privileged sectors of society. This is most evident in former and continuing English colonies, such as India and Hong Kong, where English continues to be the language of elite business and government, and the entire native elite is bilingual in English and a mother tongue. It is also evident in Latin America and even former French colonies, where the stature of English as <u>the</u> international language obliges every serious businessman or government official to have at least some knowledge of English, and English fluency is both a

status symbol and a very useful tool. Indeed, one conscious future use of this tool is to facilitate emigration to the United States.

In addition to these broad questions, there are also some issues involved here which are more specifically educational. In this analysis we compare those with schooling abroad and those without. The "without" category is somewhat mixed, since it includes illiterates as well as those who came to the United States at an early age and had all their schooling here. Of course, the two categories are not mutually exclusive. Our analysis is only preliminary, but we believe that the comparison between those with substantial portions of their schooling abroad with those who were schooled largely in the United States will tell us something about the relative advantage of first acquiring a firm educational grounding in one's mother tongue in contrast to being thrust into schooling operated in an unfamiliar language. In previous papers (Lopez, 1976; Lopez, 1982) we discussed the special character of the "first and a half" generation, those foreign-born who come to the United States as young children. It was argued that their experience is closer to that of the second generation than the first, in terms of both advantages and disadvantages. If we can demonstrate that immigrants do better if their schooling has been prior to emigration tha. if they come here as young children, then we will be supporting this line of thought, at least with respect to the disadvantages of home/school bilingualism.

Data and Methods

The data for this analysis come from the 1976 Survey of Income and Education, a large survey (a sort of expanded Current Population Survey) conducted by the Bureau of the Census. The SIE contains by far the richest set of language data ever collected on the national level; to date only about half has been properly exploited. Each immigrant was asked whether or not s/he attended school before coming to the United States and, if so, for how long. Immigrants were also asked if any of

their schooling had been in English, and again for how long. The actual format of this question was the following:

"In what language was . . . taught subjects as arithmetic, science and history?

English Language other than English"

The number of years was simplified to five categories, with the fifth indicating "five or more." Most (80%) of those indicating any schooling in English checked "five or more" so that this item turned out to be of no use and will not be discussed here.

There are considerable questions of validity and meaning surrounding the schooling in English question. First, there are the questions of on what level and for how long. Since the question is not phrased in terms of "ever," it is likely that people would respond "English" only if most of their schooling was in English, but we really do not know. Another issue is just how "English" was the English. In Hong Kong and some other areas affected by British colonialism, there exist multitiered school systems in which there is an important quality and status distinction between the first and second levels, even though both were theoretically operated in English. Again, we do not know whether or not individuals who attended these marginally "English" schools would answer "English" or "other language." This question, like most others regarding language use, particularly in the past, is subjective and has fuzzy edges. That hardly means that it is useless, however. Indeed, since attending school in English has a social as well as linguistic meaning, and since social boundaries are relatively clear-cut in the Third World, we can expect that it will be associated with both socioeconomic and linguistic characteristics.

In our analysis we relate these educational background factors to both socioeconomic and language measures. Of the former we have only earned income and total years of schooling; occupational information is missing from the data set we are using. English language use and ability are measured by various measures. The use measures include a

four-category English Use Scale (English Only; Primarily English but also Non-English; Primarily Non-English but also English; and Non-English Only) and the usual language one speaks with friends. The first is a well-proven general indicator of language use (see Lopez, 1982), while the second is intended to indicate sociometric assimilation as well as acculturation. Virtually all of these immigrants continue to use their mother tongue as at least an adjunct to English, and the majority speak it as their usual language. Ability in English is measured by a standard "How well does . . . understand spoken Enigish" question. We have also included the frequency with which one reads an English-language newspaper, which we take as a question that taps English use, ability and acculturation. All these variables, dependent and independent, have been coded so that they can be used for correlational as well as cross-tabular analysis. This enables us to make use of multiple regression, so that, when necessary, we can introduce needed controls like age, years in the United States and age on arrival to the United States.

In order to maximize the amount of data available to us, we have included in the analysis all immigrants over 14, the census cutting point between adult and child. At certain points in the analysis we have controlled statistically for age where it might have been clearer to just limit the analysis to those over, say, 25 years of age. However, only a few percent of the samples are teenagers, so that the results would not change substantially if a higher age limit were used. We wanted, in this first pass, to include even the very young who are now in the work force; income is measured only for those who are working. Both educational and income measures are accurate indicators of <u>relative</u> differences between subgroups, but they should not be taken as correct in their <u>absolute</u> levels. "Hispanic" includes any immigrant who indicated that s/he was Mexican, Latin American or Other Hispanic. "Asian" includes Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean and Vietnamese immigrants.

Results

Table 1 presents the essential characteristics of the Hispanic and Asian groups. Both include subgroups that vary considerably (Mexicans and Cubans, Japanese and Filipinos, etc.), but because of the expected rarity of being schooled in English abroad, we chose to limit the analysis of these two broad groups. In some demographic characteristics they differ little. Hispanics are slightly younger and on the average came to the United States slightly earlier, but the differences are not great, and the average years in the United States are nearly identical. This means that, at least on an aggregate level, we need not be concerned about life cycle differences leading to spurious differences between the two groups.

The socioeconomic differences are slightly greater: Asian immigrants average three years more schooling and 18% more income (for those with any earned income). Age and sex controls would not substantially alter that differential. The Asians are also more likely to report that they understand English well or very well (75% compared to 60%) and that they usually speak English with their friends (39% compared to 27%).

Table 1 also shows substantial background differences. The Asian immigrants report an average of 11.0 years of schooling before coming to the United States, in contrast to only 7.6 years for the Hispanics. These figures are only for those who report any schooling before emigration, which includes 82% of the Hispanics and 92% of the Asians. Remember that since the samples include both those who have not yet completed their schooling as well as the very old who grew up in a much different world, these educational figures must be taken as relative, not absolute, indicators.

Of those educated in English, Asians also report slightly more years of such education, though the "five or more" meaning of the top category renders this comparison all but meaningless. Anything but meaningless, however, is the striking difference between the

Table 1

Selected Characteristics of Hispanic and Asian Immigrants 14 and Over in the United States: Spring 1976

	Hispanics	Asians
Population Estimate	3,232,000	1,052,000
Sample Size	3,666	2,117
Average years of schooling	9.9	13.0
Percent with any schooling abroad	82	92
Average years of schooling abroad of those with any	7.6	11.0
Percent with any English schooling abroad of those with any schooling abroad	3	31
Average years of schooling in English abroad (5 = 5 or more)	4.3	4.8
Average income (of those with any income)	$6,254 (25,048)	$7,368 (8,145)
Average age	38.3	41.1
Average age at immigration	21.4	24.3
Average years in the United States	16.9	16.4
Percent who said they understand English very well or well	60	75
Percent who usually speak English	27	39

proportions reporting any English schooling abroad: 31% of the Asians contrasted to only 3% of the Hispanics (again, the base is limited to those with any schooling abroad). All the other Asian-Hispanic differences pale into insignificance in comparison with this one. If English language schooling in the Third World is an accurate indicator of upper-middle-class, or at least middle-class, status, then this means that a third of the Asian immigrants are of this privileged class background, in comparison to only 3% of the Hispanics. It could be argued that English schooling is simply more common in East Asia, where English is the elite lingua franca, than in Latin America. Certainly a larger proportion of Hong Kong's school children study in English (more or less) than do the school children of Mexico or Guatemala. But Hong Kong is hardly representative of all of East Asia, especially if China is included. Even if English schooling is more common in Hong Kong, the fact remains that it both symbolizes other advantages and is itself an intrinsic advantage for immigrants to the United States. And Asian immigrants are ten times more likely than Hispanic immigrants to have this advantage.

Before we assess the effect of that advantage, by looking at its correlates within as well as across ethnic groups, we need to look at the correlates of schooling abroad generally. We first examine socioeconomic correlates of schooling, then of schooling in English. Then we turn to language use and ability correlates of both.

Table 2 gives the associations between total schooling and current income with having any education abroad. This is done in two ways: Comparing group means and then using partial regression coefficients (betas), with years in the United States controlled. For both ethnic groups there is a decided difference, with those having at least some schooling abroad having the advantage. These differences remain even when we control for years in the United States. Since age and whether or not one has any schooling abroad are essentially uncorrelated, controlling for age would not make any difference either. The ethnic gaps between total schooling and current income remain when those with some schooling abroad are compared: Asians continue to have three year

Table 2

Schooling and Income by Whether or Not Immigrants Had Any Schooling Abroad: Hispanic and Asian Immigrants 14 and Over in the United States, Spring, 1976

	Hispanics	Asians
Mean Total Schooling		
Some schooling abroad	10.2 (2,550,000)	13.4 (968,000)
No schooling abroad	8.4 (572,000)	7.9 (84,000)
Education-School abroad / Years in U.S.	.15**	.28**
Mean Income (of those with any income)		
Some schooling abroad	$6,515 (207,800)	$7,568 (742,000)
No schooling abroad	$4,895 (427,000)	$5,316 (72,000)
Income-School Abroad / Years in U.S.	.14**	.09**
Sample N =	3,666	2,118
Population Estimate =	3,232,000	1,052,000

**Significant at the .01 level

and one thousand dollar advantages. However, the income gap for those with no schooling abroad is narrowed, and, in the case of total schooling, the Hispanics actually have a slight advantage. Further analysis and controls are required to fully understand what this means. In particular, we need to know more about the composition of the "no schooling abroad" categories.

Table 3 looks at the same dependent variables--total schooling and current income--but relates them to the years of schooling abroad, for those who had any at all. Since both the dependent and independent variables are likely to be confounded with age, that has been used as the control variable in this table. It makes little difference. For both ethnic groups, schooling abroad and total schooling are strongly correlated, and the age control does not alter this. Of course, this is but another way of saying that education is correlated with education, since Table 1 showed us that the bulk of the schooling of both Hispanic and Asian immigrants takes place before they come to the United States. Of more interest is the association with income. It is less, of course, but still substantial (.24 for Hispanics and .18 for Asians), and not reduced by age controls. We know, of course, that income and education are correlated in virtually all populations, and that our education abroad variable is highly associated with total schooling. What happens when total education is controlled, making the net relation a measure of the value of having a larger proportion of one's education abroad? The net relation is reduced for Hispanics, and becomes zero for the Asians. This is not easy to interpret, but it seems to suggest that for those who have schooling both in the United States and their mother country, it is an advantage for Hispanics to have relatively more schooling abroad, while for Asians it makes no difference. In any case, recall that Table 2 shows that for both groups it is better to have some schooling abroad than to have no schooling abroad at all.

Table 4.a presents the relations between having any schooling abroad in English and current educational and income levels, for those with any schooling abroad. Table 1 showed us that this characteristic

Table 3

Schooling and Income by Years of Schooling Abroad: Pearson Correlation Coefficients and Partial Correlations with Age Controlled for Hispanics and Asians 14 and Over in the United States, Spring, 1976

	Hispanics	Asians
D.V. = Total Schooling		
Total schooling with years abroad	.69	.72
Total years abroad / Age	.70	.64
D.V. = Income		
Income with years abroad	.24	.18
Income-years abroad / Age	.24	.18
Income-years abroad / Total education	.11	.01
Sample N =	2,989	1,858
Population estimate =	2,660,000	968,000

All coefficients significant at .01 level

Table 4.a

Correlations and Betas of Schooling and Income by Whether or Not Immigrants had any Schooling in English Abroad. Hispanics and Asians 14 and Over in the United States, Spring, 1976

	Hispanics	Asians
D.V. = Total Schooling		
Schooling with any English abroad	.11**	.24**
Schooling-English abroad / Years in U.S.	.12**	.23**
D.V. = Income		
Income with any English abroad	.06*	.20**
Income-English abroad / Years in U.S.	.05*	.21**
Income-English abroad / Years in U.S. & total schooling	.02	.13**
Sample N =	2,989	1,858
Population estimate =	2,660,000	968,000

** = .01 level

* = .05 level

is much more common among Asians; this table indicates that it is also a greater advantage for them. For Hispanics there is a modest but significant association between total schooling and having some schooling abroad in English, and this effect is not reduced when we control for years in the United States (or age, though this is excluded from the table). The effect is stronger for Asians, however. That is, schooling in English is a stronger differentiating factor among Asians than it is among Hispanics. Here the relatively small proportion of Hispanics with English schooling needs to be recalled. Unlike the situation for East Asians, schooling in English is not a universal characteristic among the better-off immigrants from Latin America. Table 4.a shows that it is only weakly associated with their ultimate schooling, and that it is nearly uncorrelated with their incomes. In contrast, the association with income remains for Asians, even when years in the United States and total schooling are controlled.

Particularly after this last finding, we may conclude that education in English is a bigger factor for Asians than for Hispanic immigrants, both in terms of its differentiating effect within the broad ethnic group, and in terms of the proportion of individuals who have the advantage. For Hispanics, the important factor seems to be whether or not they have any schooling before coming to the United States, and if so, how much.

Table 4.a gave a good indication of the magnitude of the effect of schooling in English abroad on ultimate schooling and income, but to assess the degree to which the ethnic differentials are reduced by controlling for such schooling, it is necessary to compare group means. This is done in Table 4.b. For education, the differences are reduced somewhat, from the 3.2 overall mean to 2.4 and 2.7. The income gap is very slightly reduced for those with schooling abroad, but is actually slightly larger for those without English schooling abroad. Another technique to the same end is to substitute the mean of one ethnic group into the regression equation of the other. This produces results comparable to those in Table 4.a, that is, the ethnic group differences were only partially reduced. We can conclude, then, that schooling

Table 4.b

Schooling and Income by Whether or Not Immigrants had any Schooling in English Abroad: Group Means

	Hispanics	Asians
Mean Total Schooling		
Schooling in English abroad	12.4 (109,000)	14.8 (312,000)
No schooling in English abroad	10.1 (2,547,000)	12.8 (653,000)
All	10.2 (2,660,000)	13.4 (968,000)
Mean Income		
Schooling in English abroad	$8,382 (88,000)	$9,156 (278,000)
No schooling in English abroad	$6,433 (1,986,000)	$6,598 (462,000)
All	$6,515 (2,078,000)	$7,568 (742,000)

abroad in English only partially explains the differences in educational and income attainment among Asian and Hispanic immigrants in the United States.

What of the effects on language patterns? Table 5 presents the correlations and spatial regression coefficients between having any schooling abroad and the English Use Scale, English Comprehension (a five point Likert scale) and frequency of reading an English language newspaper (three categories). Control variables include years in the United States and age on arrival. The results are generally more mixed than what has come before, but then the meanings of these relations are more complex. After all, having schooling abroad implicitly means not having it in the United States. Thus, for Hispanics the correlation between schooling abroad and using English is actually negative, though it reduces to essentially zero when the controls are introduced. For Asians, the relation is slightly negative, but it robustly resists the controls. For Hispanics, the association with English ability is slightly negative and goes to slightly positive when controls are added. The same is true for reading an English newspaper. However, the relations are much stronger for Asians. Why? Remember that we know that a large portion of the schooling abroad for Asians was in English. Since this complication is so important, we should go directly to its direct consideration.

Table 6 presents the same sort of analysis, but now the independent variable is whether or not people had any schooling abroad in English. By and large, the table shows strong effects, which is comforting, for if there were no strong relations between English schooling and current use and ability in English, one would have to question the validity of the entire analysis. For both Hispanic and Asian immigrants, English schooling abroad is substantially correlated (.30 and .26) with using English now, and these correlations are not reduced when years in the United States and age on arrival are controlled. English schooling is slightly less strongly associated with reported English ability for Hispanics, but <u>more</u> strongly associated among the Asians. That is, prior study in English makes

Table 5

English Language Use and Ability by Whether or Not Immigrants Had Any Schooling Abroad: Hispanics and Asians 14 and Over in the United States, Spring, 1976

	Hispanics	Asians
D.V. = English Use Scale		
	-.14**	-.06**
Years in U.S.	-.07**	-.06**
Years in U.S. and age arrived	.01	-.06**
D.V. = English Comprehension Ability		
	-.06**	.20**
Years in U.S.	.02	.20**
Years in U.S. and age arrived	.07**	.12**
D.V. = Frequency Read English Newspaper		
	-.03	.26**
Years in U.S.	.05*	.25**
Years in U.S. and age arrived	.08**	.23**
Above and total education	.01	.10**
Sample N	3,666	2,118
Population estimate	3,232,000	1,052,000

** = .01 level
* = .05 level

Table 6

English Language Use and Ability by Whether or Not Immigrants Had Any Schooling in English Abroad. Hispanics and Asians 14 and Over in the United States, Spring, 1976

	Hispanics	Asians
D.V. = English Use Scale		
	.30	.26
Years in U.S.	.28	.26
Years in U.S. and age arrived	.26	.24
D.V. = English Comprehension Ability		
	.17	.40
Years in U.S.	.15	.40
Years in U.S. and age arrived	.13	.37
D.V. = Frequency Read English Newspaper		
Years in U.S.	.09	.34
Years in U.S. and age arrived	.07	.34
Above and total education	.05*	.33
Sample N	2,989	1,858
Population estimate	2,660,000	968,000

* = .05 level; all others at .01 or above

more of a specifically linguistic difference for the Asians. The same ethnic difference can be seen in the relation to the English newspaper reading variable, which is much more strongly associated with prior study of English for the Asians. On all of these indicators, Asians report that they use or are more able with English, though, as Table 1 shows, the differences are not great. If prior study in English is so important for Asians, both as a differentiating factor among them and in terms of the number who do study English before coming to the United States, then it would be interesting to compare Hispanics and Asians by whether or not they studied English. This is done in Table 7, with interesting results. The small number of Hispanic immigrants who studied English before coming to the United States rank distinctly higher than their Asian equivalents on both English ability (91% compared to 79% "very well") and usually using English with friends (73% compared to 52%). The small proportion of Hispanic immigrants who come already schooled in English makes this statistical control open to question, but it seems fair to suggest that we have here another indication of a specifically linguistic effect. That is, having studied English abroad for Spanish-speakers produces greater familiarity and comfort with English than the equivalent years of study for Asian language speakers.

Socioeconomic differentials were reduced considerably when the effect of having studied English was controlled. English use and ability differentials are not only reduced, but they actually disappear. Findings such as the one just discussed, while intriguing, need to be considered in perspective: Previous study of English produces measurable socioeconomic and English language ability advantages for both Hispanic and Asian immigrants, and statistically controlling for previous study of English and pre-emigration education generally reduces the socioeconomic differences to be observed between Asian and Hispanic immigrants. But the study of English is such a comparatively rare phenomenon among the Hispanic immigrants, who come from demonstrably more disadvantaged backgrounds, that the overall impact is slight among them. That Asian immigrants are ten times more likely to have gone to school in English before emigrating, as well as

have higher prior education levels generally, are factors that must be taken into account whenever any comparisons among Asian and Hispanic immigrants are being made.

Table 7

English Speaking Ability and Language Usually Spoken to Friends by Whether or Not Any Schooling Abroad was in English: Hispanic and Asian Immigrants With Any Schooling Abroad, 14 and Over, in the United States, Spring, 1976

	Hispanic		Asian	
	English Abroad	No English	English Abroad	No English
English Comprehension Ability				
Very well	91%	33%	79%	34%
Well	8%	24%	18%	33%
Not well	1%	43%	3%	32%
	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)	(100%)
Percent who usually speak English with friends	73%	21%	52%	34%
Sample N	89	2,900	575	1,282
Population estimate	78,000	2,582,000	299,000	668,000

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